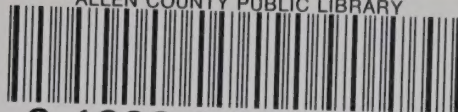


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BUGLES IN A DREAM

DU PAGE COUNTY, *Ill.* IN THE CIVIL WAR

ROYAL J. SCHMIDT

Professor of History and Political Science
Elmhurst College

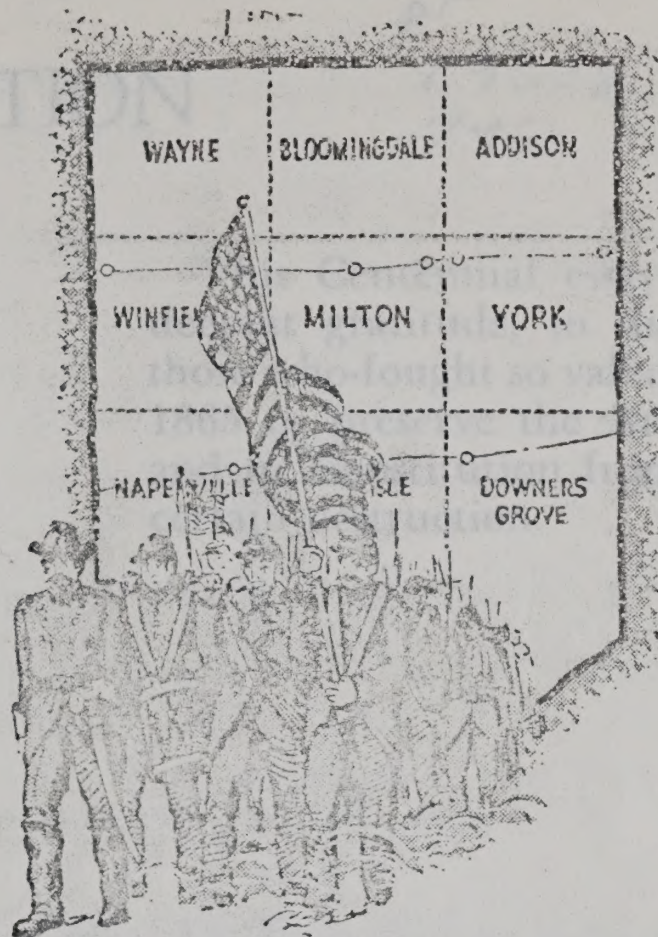
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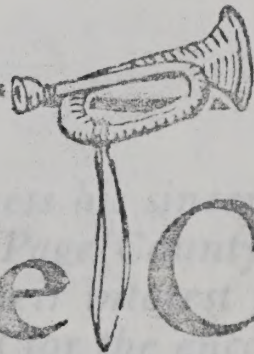
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THE
NEWBERRY



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Bugles in a Dream



DuPage County
in the

HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
OF
DU PAGE
COUNTY
ILLINOIS

Portfolio Series
Number Five

1962

CIVIL
WAR

DEDICATION

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This Centennial essay is dedicated, in deepest gratitude, to the memory of all those who fought so valiantly from 1861 to 1865 to preserve the American Republic and its Constitution from dissolution and certain destruction.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to express his sincere appreciation to members of the Du Page County Historical Society and its friends for their interest in this project. He is especially grateful for the encouragement and valuable suggestions of Helmut A. Berens and Fred Evers of Elmhurst, Hugh Dugan of Hinsdale, and Elbert Rogers of Downers Grove. All of these members of the Society contributed most liberally of their time and knowledge of Du Page County history. Special acknowledgement should also go to E. B. Long, Research Assistant to Bruce Catton, for his careful reading and criticism of the manuscript. We are likewise indebted to Chester Bratten of Hinsdale for the cover design.—R.J.S.

Gift 63
Du Page Historical Society
Elmhurst, Ill.

FOREWORD



NEWBERRY LIBRARY

What Du Page County lacks in the outward symbols of historical importance is in marked contrast to many of the deeds of its citizens. This is very evident in the county's participation in the Civil War.

When the war broke out, the scattered population was largely agricultural, and the few villages and hamlets were agricultural centers. This true account of Du Page soldiers' part in the war reveals a contribution toward the final victory that is out of proportion to the county's quiet, pastoral aspects when the conflict began.

Dr. Royal J. Schmidt is an historian both by profession and avocation, and is a keen student of the war between the states. The society's board was fortunate in finding, among its members, one who is so well qualified to present to you this major contribution to its PORTFOLIO series. It is an accurate and highly readable account of the part taken by the soldiers of Du Page in the war that welded a nation.

Hugh G. Dugan
President, D.P.C.H.S. 1960-61

BUGLES IN A DREAM

DU PAGE COUNTY IN THE CIVIL WAR

ROYAL J. SCHMIDT

*"With malice toward none, with charity for all,
with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see
the right"*

Lincoln, 1865

Du Page County, Illinois, was still a sparsely settled rural area in April, 1861, when the shocking news of the South's attack on Fort Sumter was flashed across the nation. The total population of Wayne, Bloomingdale, Addison, York, Milton, Winfield, Naperville, Lisle, and Downers Grove townships reached a figure of some 15,262 persons in that year. The citizens of the county responded promptly to every call of President Lincoln, whether for men or money, during the ensuing Civil War. Throughout the long and bitter conflict there was strong feeling for suppression of rebellion and preservation of the Union.¹

During the course of the war years the names of more than 1500 of Du Page's sons were recorded on the rolls of forty infantry regiments, ten regiments of cavalry, and five regiments of artillery.² Men from the county fought in most of the major battles of the war under the leadership of generals such as Grant, Pope, Buell, Rosecrans, Hooker, Howard, Sherman, MacClellan, Burnside, Buford, and Meade. While the records of this military participation form but a part of the whole story of Du Page County's contribution to the war effort, it is the part with which this history is primarily concerned.

Following the opening of hostilities on April 12, 1861, the county was alive with patriotic enthusiasm which persisted throughout the long and bloody struggle. While Lincoln and the Republicans had received strong support in the election of 1860, political party lines were not sharply drawn during the war period. A Union Party was formed by the fall of 1861 and elective offices

were given to Republicans and Democrats alike.³ The demand for the abolition of Negro slavery had existed in the county for some time and underground railway stations were functioning at Downers Grove, Wheaton, Babcock's Grove (Lombard), Fullersburg and Naperville. Jonathan Blanchard, President of Wheaton College, was an influential figure in the anti-slavery movement.⁴ Following the outbreak of the conflict, plans for the college commencement were cancelled and some sixty-seven young men from the school joined the Union Army. The main question for most people in the county was that of secession and rebellion.

While evidence of local Du Page County newspaper opinion has unfortunately not survived, an editorial which appeared in the *Chicago Tribune*, April 30, 1861, undoubtedly met with widespread sympathy. Viewing the reaction of the people following the attack on Fort Sumter the *Tribune* observed:

The perfect fusion of all parties and sects into one great patriotic mass of the North, may be set down as the greatest marvel of the age. The Puritan and the Catholic, the skeptic and the Orthodox, the Republican and the Democrat, the Radical and the Foggy, have all united and laid aside their prejudices and differences, and joined in the work of crushing the treason against the Republic. The bombardment of Sumter was the wand of enchantment which fused into one patriotic mass twenty millions of people. Every man and woman felt that their honor was at stake and their liberties assailed. The people volunteer for the war and march to battle as if impelled by a decree of the Eternal. The conflict is commenced and there can be neither pause nor peace until the rebellion is put down, obedience to the laws restored, and the supremacy of the Constitution vindicated. This war is one of those terrible issues which can only be settled by appeal to the God of battles. The life of the Republic is at stake. Constitutional liberty and military despotism have grappled and there can be no compromise until one or the other goes down in blood.⁵

Meetings for the recruitment of volunteers were held in all neighborhoods in the county. School houses, churches and halls were utilized for this purpose. Such meetings were presided over by various prominent men of the county who encouraged volunteers to sign the muster rolls. Deep feeling was manifested at all of these occasions. Cyrenus Wirt Litchfield of Cottage Hill (Elmhurst) in York township was the first to enlist on April 19, 1861. He joined Barker's Dragoons, an artillery unit led by C. W. Barker of Chicago and described by the *Chicago Tribune* of April 25, 1861, as "a splendid body of men." York township was represented in nearly all of the subsequent great battles of the war. In Naperville township the name of Charles Beckman of Naperville stood at the head of the muster roll of Company K, 13th Infantry, the first organization that entered service for the county. Addison township contributed some 120 men during the war. Frederick Fischer was the first to enlist from Addison. His brother August H. Fischer of the 105th Illinois Infantry was killed at Atlanta, August 13, 1864.⁶

As the war progressed, soldiers aid societies were formed in every town in the county to furnish hospital supplies of food and clothing suited to the wants of the sick and wounded. A sum of more than \$180,000 was spent by county authorities in bounties for soldiers and for support of their families. Town authorities appropriated almost half as much more.⁷

The 7th Illinois Infantry, mustered in at Camp Yates, Springfield, by Captain John Pope, April 25, 1861, was one of the first in the field following President Lincoln's call for volunteers. It included twenty-four men from Du Page. When the regiment was reorganized for three year service on July 25, 1861, at Camp Yates, many of the original volunteers reenlisted. The *Chicago Tribune* described the scene at Camp Yates as highly exhilarating. The paper pictured the daily routine as follows:

At five o'clock in the morning the reveille was beaten and the soldiers sprang from their barracks to fall into line for the morning exercise, which was performed with or without muskets, according to the proficiency of the companies. From one to two hours were passed in drill. Rations were then served,

the camp fires kindled, and the soldiers, whose appetites were now decidedly 'wire-edged', proceeded to cook their bacon, potatoes and coffee. After breakfast there was a recess which was occupied according to the inclinations of the soldiers—some smoking, others running races, playing leap frog, or pitching quoits. At the signal of the drum, the drill recommenced and continued, with short intervals, until dinner which was prepared and eaten by the soldiers in messes of six or seven. At six o'clock, the drum beat the retreat.⁸



After early service in Missouri, where it joined the command of Brigadier General B. M. Prentiss, the 7th joined the forces under General Grant which took over and occupied the highly strategic Confederate strongholds of Ft. Henry and Ft. Donelson on the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers during February, 1862. Following the seizure of Ft. Henry, which was actually captured by Federal gunboats, the *Chicago Tribune* announced on February 8 that the Tennessee River was "now open to our gunboats clear up to the Muscle Shoals in North Alabama" . . . The paper urged the Government at Washington to keep hands off and let the western boys "go in and win." The journal reflected some of the sectional rivalry which had grown up on the Union side:

Let us have no red tape, no hesitation, no more distrust of the courage and endurance of our Western troops. The West has today one hundred and fifty thousand well armed, well disciplined, loyal, brave and impatient troops in Kentucky. Let them fight! They can fight and conquer any army that secession has in the field in the West or on the Potomac. They want to fight. Their hearts are in the cause. Their lives are at the service of their dear country. We

implore that no distrust of them, no jealousy of rival commanders, no coquetting with rebellion, no fear of hurting slavery, may be permitted to rob them of the imperishable honor that they are burning to win. The road is open. Let the flag of the Union be advanced.'

Men of the 7th, who took part in the investment and siege of Ft. Donelson from February 12 to 16th, were among those who followed the courageous leadership of General C. F. Smith in his attack on the Confederate breastworks February 15.

In April, 1862, the 7th saw grim and bloody action in the desperate encounter at Pittsburg Landing (Shiloh) where Confederate forces under Albert Sidney Johnston surprised and vainly sought to destroy Grant's army. The regiment had reached Pittsburg Landing on March 22. It was continuously engaged on April 6 and 7 at Shiloh under Lt. Col. Rowett in General W. H. L. Wallace's Division. It went into action between 9 and 10 o'clock, April 6. Following the mortal wounding of Wallace and the wounding of Brigade Commander T. W. Sweeney, Rowett obtained permission from General John A. McClernand to form on his left where the men of the 7th became a part of his line. The 7th was in the line that repulsed the last charge of the enemy on the night of the 6th, when it was advanced to a picket line where it remained until relieved by General Buell's command near daylight the following morning. It went into action before noon on the 7th and was hotly engaged when the enemy retreated at 3 P.M.¹⁰ Other Du Page County men saw action at Shiloh with the 15th, 55th and 58th Infantry Regiments.

At Allatoona Pass, Georgia, in October, 1864, the 7th lost 143 men. The regiment, part of General John M. Corse's 4th Division of the 15th Army corps, took part in the courageous defense of the pass against a Confederate force attached to General Hood's army. The defending force of 1500 under Col. Rowett successfully held the pass against the attacks of 6000 Confederates led by General French. The 7th was complimented warmly by Sherman, who commented, "For the numbers engaged, they stood upon the bloodiest battlefield ever known on the American continent." During the same year the 7th became a part of Sherman's army which made

the long march to the sea. From Savannah it marched northward to participate in the Carolina campaign. Following the surrender of Gen. Joseph Johnston's army, the 7th took part in the Grand Review at Washington and was subsequently mustered out at Louisville. It was the first organized regiment from Illinois mustered into the United States service and the first to return to the State Capital and reenlist as veterans. It was also one of the very few units in the whole army that purchased its own guns, the Henry rifles, sixteen-shooters which cost \$50 each. The men paid for them out of their meager pay of \$13 per month. Col. Rowett insisted that the gallant 1500 at Allatoona Pass would have been overwhelmed by French's 6000 rebels without the aid of the sixteen-shooters. Among the Du Page County casualties were Allen Bates of Wayne township, who was killed at Shiloh; Stephen Ward of Warrenville, killed at Rome, Georgia; and John Hubrecht of Naperville, who died from wounds suffered at Allatoona Pass.¹¹

The 13th Infantry, which was mustered into service at Dixon, May 24, 1861, with John B. Wyman as colonel, included ninety-two men from Du Page. Company K, led by Captain Walter Blanchard of Downers Grove, was made up largely of men from that community and other Du Page towns. It saw early service with General John Charles Fremont's army in Missouri. In March, 1862, the regiment came under the command of General Samuel Curtis and took part in the memorable march across the country from Pea Ridge to Helena, Arkansas, during the course of which the men suffered terribly from thirst, heat, and short rations.¹² Later the regiment was attached to the Army of the Tennessee. Under General Sherman's leadership, it was placed in the advance and fought valiantly in the futile attempt on December 29, 1862, to destroy Confederate defenses at Chickasaw Bayou which protected Vicksburg, Mississippi. Col. Wyman was killed in this action. Several Du Page men, including Charles Hyde and Charles Austin Napier of Naperville, were among the 177 who gave up their lives at Chickasaw Bayou.¹³

From May 22 to July 4, 1863, Company K, in conjunction with Du Page men serving in the 33rd and 72nd Infantry Regiments, participated in Grant's brilliant bypass of the heavily fortified city of Vicksburg. The 13th was with General Sherman's Corps on the right of Grant's army during the siege of the city. Heavy casualties were sustained during the fruitless attack by General Steele's divi-

sion on the rebel works, May 22, 1863. Men from Du Page County were on hand to hail the surrender of this key point on the Mississippi on July 4.¹⁴

After the Confederate success in penetrating the Union lines at Chickamauga, Georgia, in September, 1863, the federal forces fell back to Chattanooga. The 13th, which had been sent in pursuit of Joe Johnston after the surrender at Vicksburg, now marched under Sherman to relieve the besieged Union forces at Chattanooga. The march from Memphis was a continuous fight as the Confederates tried every way in their power to prevent Sherman's forces from joining Grant's army. At Chattanooga the 13th came to the aid of the besieged forces and fought alongside of other Du Page men, serving with the 36th, 51st, 72nd, 88th and 89th Infantry Regiments in the capture of Lookout Mountain and the fighting at Missionary Ridge. It was under the Division of General Peter J. Osterhaus, temporarily attached to Hooker's command at Missionary Ridge, that the 13th captured 2500 prisoners. These engagements completely relieved Chattanooga and forced withdrawal of Braxton Bragg's defeated Confederate army into Georgia.¹⁵

Company K took part in the pursuit of Bragg's broken and retreating army. At Ringgold Gap, where the 13th suffered heavy casualties, the Du Page unit lost its brave commander, Captain Walter Blanchard. General Hooker described the conduct of the 13th at Ringgold Gap as "heroic, resolute, and obstinate." Du Page County had furnished 10% of the manpower of this notable regiment. During the course of the war, the men marched over 3000 miles, traveled through seven southern states, and participated in twenty different battles and skirmishes. The regiment did not march with Sherman to the sea but was left to guard communications in the rear.

The 33rd Illinois Infantry included forty-seven Du Page men. They participated in battles at Fredericktown, Missouri; Port Gibson, Champion's Hill, Black River Bridge, the assault on and siege of Vicksburg, the siege of Jackson, Mississippi, and Ft. Esperanza, Texas, as well as in the expedition against Mobile. After the surrender of Mobile, the unit marched with the 16th Corps to Montgomery, Alabama, where news was received of the surrender of Lee and Johnston.¹⁶

The Fifty-first Regiment, which included eighteen men from Du Page County, served under General Pope during the seizure of Island Number 10, a strategic objective in the early campaign to gain control of the Mississippi waterway. The regiment, following the fiery inferno of Chickamauga, served under Sherman in the pursuit of Confederate forces led by Johnston. At Kennesaw Mountain the regiment lost three officers killed, four wounded, and one hundred and five men killed or wounded. A considerable number of men from Cottage Hill (Elmhurst) were among the casualties. These included Ansel Bates, Gustav Bleasch, John Foley, Paul Hoffman, Christian Johnson, Philip Kehler, Stephen Keiler, Henry Lapp, John Lauerman, Edgar Snow and William Welsh.¹⁷ Other Du Page men served with the 52nd and 55th Infantry Regiments at Kennesaw Mountain.

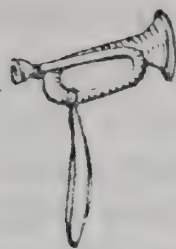
The battles which immediately preceded the surrender of Atlanta to Sherman's forces embraced the period from July 20 to September 2, 1864. Du Page men participated in the ranks of the 36th and 105th Infantry Regiments, as well as in the 12th Cavalry. The greatest number served in the 105th Infantry which contained four companies (403 men) from the County. Theodore S. Rogers of Downers Grove, Sheriff of Du Page County, had received a commission as captain to recruit one company of 100 men for three years service in this regiment. By August 6, 1861, some 138 men had enlisted as Company B. Captain Rogers' company formed an important part of the 105th. Another company, Company D, was enlisted by Captain Amos C. Graves of Winfield. Enos Jones of Milton and Captain Locke of Addison filled another company, Company I, as did Captain Seth F. Daniels, who mustered in Company F. Four full companies were thus recruited in less than thirty days in Du Page County. Congressmen Lewis Ellsworth, Thomas B. Bryan and H. C. Childs, who had been instrumental in raising these companies, received recognition when Rogers company was christened "Ellsworth's Guards", Captain Graves company became "Child's Rifles", and Daniels company was entitled "Bryan's Blues." The regiment, which has served with General O. O. Howard's 11th Corps, was eventually consolidated with the 12th Corps at Chattanooga, the whole force being under Hooker. The unit participated in the Atlanta campaign, taking part in engagements at Resaca, Kennesaw Mountain, Peach Tree Creek, Atlanta, the march to the sea and the campaign in the Carolinas.¹⁸

The recently published diaries of Robert Hale Strong of Naperville, a young man of 19 when he joined the 105th Infantry, furnished vivid glimpses of the war. His description of the costly battle at Kennesaw Mountain follows:

We were seven days getting old Johnston on the run at Kennesaw Mountain . . . It was a grand and splendid sight at night to see the Rebel campfires and to see their cannon, away upon the mountain-side, burst forth in red flame. One moment the glare would show us trees, men, guns. The next minute all would be dark. We would watch the course of the shells by the lighted fuses, like huge fireflies the shells revolved in their courses, then burst in the air, sending their contents hissing on ahead.¹⁹

Strong was a skirmisher and forager with Sherman's forces during the march to the sea from November 14 to December 22, 1864. He describes some of the harsh realities of war which no doubt prompted Sherman's alleged comment on war being hell. A glimpse is given of a Confederate field hospital with its nearby pile of arms, legs, and hands. The men were constantly forced to face the nauseous sight of badly charred bodies on the battlefield. Strong, along with other Du Page men in the 105th, was under fire every day for a month. Many times he slept in the rain and piled rocks together to keep out of the water. Body lice were constant companions, while afflictions such as rheumatism and diarrhea were common. After the battles were over, according to Strong, "the fields looked as if we could walk over men without putting foot to the ground." Disease and lack of proper sanitation killed nearly three times as many soldiers as were killed by bullets. Measles, pneumonia, and dysentery were among the great killers. In spite of such hardships, the men kept up their spirits well and sang such songs as "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" and "We're Coming Father Abraham 300,000 strong", as they marched along.²⁰ The reading of Strong's diary suggests that much of the day-by-day routine of the great sectional conflict will never be adequately described. The amount of pure misery endured by the men of Du Page and their comrades in arms would be difficult, if not impossible, to imagine.

Sherman's assignments were often difficult to fulfill. Strong describes one recollection of the Atlanta campaign:



On a hill in our front was a Rebel battery that had been playing on us all day. We had for hours expected that we might be ordered to capture that battery. Sure enough, pretty soon along came an orderly enquiring for the commanding officer. We were ordered to unsling knapsacks and put them in a pile. Then we were ordered to fix bayonets and prepare to charge the battery. "Sherman wants those guns," the order came to us. Mark Naper up and says, "Tell Sherman he can have them—we don't want them and will give him our title to them." Al Wiant looked up at the battery then up and down our lines, and says: "Well boys, if Old Billy wants them, he has got to have them. I say lets all chip in and go get the things for him." And so we did.²¹

The men of the 105th subsequently took part in the Grand Review at Washington where they received a compliment for their movements in the manual of arms and for their military appearance. There was a larger proportion of Du Page County citizens in this regiment than in any other during the war.

Du Page men also gave valiant service in various cavalry units during the conflict. At Junction, a company called the Winfield Cavalry, which had been organized in 1855, tendered its services to Governor Yates. It numbered 65 men and was composed of farmers and farmers sons—each man owning his own horse. By 1861 it was well drilled and fit for service.²²

Among the ten cavalry regiments which enlisted Du Page men, the 8th Cavalry included the largest group, some 198 in all. Following the Union defeat in the First Battle of Bull Run on July

21, 1861, Congressman John F. Farnsworth of Aurora, one of the founders of the Republican Party who had been elected from his district in the campaign of 1860, resigned his seat in Congress and secured President Lincoln's permission to raise and equip a cavalry regiment of 1200 men for three years service. Farnsworth was one of the first in the North to see the urgent need for cavalry. The Confederates were very active in this respect from the beginning of the conflict under such leaders as Stuart, Ashby, Wheeler, Forrest, Morgan and Mosby. The rush was so great to join the 8th Cavalry that Col. Farnsworth is said to have commented that he could have mustered a brigade had he been authorized to do so.²³

In spite of the serious reverse sustained by the Union at Bull Run, many of the men of the 8th Cavalry believed that the war could not last very long. One of them, Francis A. Rogers of Downers Grove penned the following optimistic comments from Washington to his parents on Nov. 10, 1861:



I think myself that this war will be settled in less than three months. I don't think the traitors will have the advantages of another Bull Run. I think the game is about played out. I am afraid that we will not have a chance to make many charges on the Rebels. I have a little sorrel horse that I should like to ride in amongst them once at any rate.

There was a splendid review here last Thursday on our Parade ground, there was twelve thousand infantry and four batteries of flying artillery and two or three regiments of cavalry, it looked some like war, I can assure you.

When the artillery came round in a circle as tight as their horses could run then they would uncouple them and fire. We could imagine how it worked in a battle. It was the most splendid sight that I ever saw. You can imagine that sixteen or eighteen thousand troops well drilled make quite a show when on parade.

General McClellan and staff was here and reviewed them. They passed examination and he gave them marching orders.

You spoke in your last letter about our not having enough to eat. I will say that whoever wrote that

home was a perfect hog. If anything we have a good deal more than we can eat, and as for clothing we have more than we can stow away. We have drawn two more coats since we came here, one of them is for everyday wear and for cleaning our horses, and the other is an overcoat. We got them yesterday. They are a little ahead of anything of the kind that I have seen yet. They are made of Black Pilot Cloth and there is a cap on them. They are the same style as the band had on at the Wheaton Fair.²⁴

Lt. Col. Abner Hard of Aurora, chief surgeon of the 8th Cavalry, kept a wartime diary which provided the basis for a history of this regiment. It was published in 1868. According to Hard, men of all callings and vocations were included in the unit. Most of them were quite ignorant of the discipline and other requirements of soldiering.²⁵

President Lincoln, when referring to the unit early in the war, is said to have called it "Farnsworth's Big Abolition Regiment." Abolitionist sentiment was strong in the group. Col. Farnsworth, in a public speech, stated that, if by shedding his blood on the banks of the Potomac, he could secure the liberty of every bondsman in America, that same blood would flow freely. During the course of the Lincoln-Douglas Debates of 1858, Douglas, on several occasions had linked Farnsworth and the Abolitionists Giddings, Lovejoy and others with Lincoln as Black Republicans who held Negroes to be the equals of white men. Like Lincoln, Farnsworth was opposed to the entrance of any new slave states.²⁶

The 8th Cavalry made its mark in the eastern theater of the war. Participating with General McClellan in the Peninsula campaign of 1862 which sought to capture Richmond by coming in from the east, men of this unit saw action at Mechanicsville during the Seven Days battle and in other engagements which brought the Army of the Potomac within sight of the spires of Richmond. Six companies of the 8th met advance units of Jackson's forces at Mechanicsville and held them in check until finally driven back. During the course of these battles, Chief Surgeon Hard made an ascension in the balloon, "Excelsior" from which he could get a view of Richmond some five miles away—so many bloody battles and so many bitter years removed from victory!²⁷

In this first major campaign of the Army of the Potomac, Farnsworth's prairie cavalry was sometimes dismounted as skirmishers and at other times engaged in savage mounted battles with the Confederate cavalry. At times the cavalry was also expected to forage for its own maintenance in the field. This was a popular activity with the enlisted men. It became a fine art among the Union cavalymen. Small foraging parties were often surprised, killed or captured while raiding some plantation. In this way the 8th lost several men. Some of these, as prisoners, including several from Du Page County, were later transferred to and died in Andersonville Prison which was established in 1864.²⁸

By June 18, 1862, young Frank Rogers, writing from the 8th Cavalry encampment near Mechanicsville to his mother in Downers Grove, described some of his reactions to the Peninsula campaign:

We are still doing picket duty. We are not in Camp but two days out of a week. The remainder of the time we are on picket some 7 miles from Camp.

Mechanicsville is about the Center of the Army and our picket post is on the extreme right wing. I like this business much better than being on the advance. We have the same place every time we go out and we have got pretty well acquainted with the folks that live around there. We fare a great deal better when we are out than we do when we are in Camp. Fruit is very plentiful in this country. There are all kinds here. There is none of it ripe yet, but cherries and strawberries. We have all of these we want. We go out scouting every day when we are out on picket and I guess you would laugh if you could see us charge on the cherry trees and strawberry patches. It does not make any difference to us whether the folks are home or not. We generally calculate to help ourselves to whatever we want, that is, if it is in the Southern Confederacy, or in other words outside of our picket lines . . . We can get milk for ten cents a quart and butter 35c a pound. When we first came out here they used to ask a dollar



a pound for butter. We trade a good deal of Sugar and Coffee and Salt and such like with them. There is the greatest demand for Salt of anything we have. They can not get any at all only what they get in this way. Salt is worth twenty eight dollars a sack in Richmond.

We can see the steeples on the churches in Richmond from our Camp quite plain. I should like to go over and visit this famous city very much and I should not wonder if we have an opportunity before many days. I think General McClellan intends to attack them very soon and I have not the least doubt but that the city will be ours when the battle is over. It is my opinion that this battle will settle the question . . .

I do not care how quick this war is wound up. The sooner the better it will suit me and I guess this is the case with most of the boys. We have lots of good times and a great many hard times. If it were not for the excitement camp life would be a very dreary life. This is what keeps the spirits up.²⁹

The 8th subsequently protected the rear of McClellan's army in its retreat toward the James River. At Malvern Hill it participated with other units in a brilliant counter attack which repulsed the flower of the Confederate Army under Lee and Jackson with severe losses to the enemy. At Gaines' Mill during the Peninsula campaign the 8th merited and received official approval for the manner in which it helped to keep in place and rally the stragglers from the infantry. The regiment remained on picket duty along the James River while McClellan's army lay at Harrison's Landing. On August 30, 1862, it embarked at Yorktown and landed at Alexandria on September 1. It was subsequently engaged at Monocacy Church, Barnesville, Sugar Loaf Mountain, Middletown, South Mountain, and Boonsborough, Maryland. The 8th also played an important part in the savage and costly battle at Antietam Creek following Lee's decision to invade the North, a battle which inflicted heavy losses on Lee's Army of Northern Virginia.

Men of the 8th have been described as ranking among the best soldiers of the war along with Sherman's veterans. During the

course of the conflict, the unit captured, wounded or killed some 2,946 of the enemy, liberated 3,000 slaves, captured or killed 4,110 horses, and destroyed 208 smuggling craft and ten tons of ammunition.

During the battles on the Peninsula, a lieutenant commanding a New York battalion reported to General Edwin V. Sumner for duty. Sumner ordered him to the front to ascertain the position of the enemy. "How far shall I go?" asked the lieutenant. Sumner, according to Hard's account, answered, "As far as you can go, and you will find the 8th Illinois miles ahead stealing mules."³⁰

Hard describes the bitter and disheartening retreat of McClellan's army during the Peninsula campaign. As surgeon he witnessed a scene of suffering which he described as "terribly sickening." Food was more important than surgery, as the men had abandoned their rations in their hasty retreat. Hard himself suffered from dysentery for two weeks. For several days, while he lay on a stretcher, he examined and prescribed for some 75 to 100 patients daily.³¹

The 8th participated in the battle of Chancellorsville under General Hooker from May 1 to 4, 1863. According to Surgeon Hard, Stonewall Jackson's successful flanking movement and surprise attack was expedited by a Confederate ruse which involved the carrying of the Union flag to deceive their opponents. Hard also contends that the 8th Cavalry played a major part in checking the enemy advance.³²

At Gettysburg the 8th was with General John Buford's cavalry division which made first contact with Lee's army on the Chambersburg Pike. Company E fired the first shots and shed the first blood in this crucial and desperate battle which raged from July 1 through July 3, 1863. On July 1 a squadron of the 8th was on picket duty along a small stream which was a few miles from Gettysburg. They had ridden into the town the day before under the command of Major John L. Beveridge, who was later to serve as Governor of Illinois. The men of the 8th were worried, as they had lost touch with their arch enemy, Jeb Stuart and his cavalry. As it turned out, Stuart was cut off from the main body of Lee's army and was forced to circle around the Union army in order to

make contact. The first shot at Gettysburg was fired at an officer in Lee's approaching army by Marcellus Jones, a resident of Danby (Glen Ellyn), Illinois. In later years Jones was a postmaster at Wheaton. What started as an outpost action soon developed into one of the major battles of modern history. A limestone monument, quarried and cast at Naperville, marks the spot where the fighting began.³³ Corporal Alpheus Hodges of the 9th New York Cavalry also claims to have fired the first shot. Lieutenant Jones' claim seems to be the stronger.

Judging from Hard's account of the battle, the 8th was nearly alone in impeding the progress of the enemy for several hours. Following the arrival of General John F. Reynold's corps, the regiment was engaged on the flanks of the enemy. General Oliver O. Howard and Abner Doubleday were in command following the death of Reynolds. Retreat was ordered by General Buford and the 8th made a stand at Cemetery Ridge. The regiment subsequently received the thanks of General Doubleday for saving his division from slaughter on the first day of the battle. Following Lee's defeat at Gettysburg, Buford's cavalry was ordered to follow his retreat and harass his shattered army.³⁴

Major Beveridge, in later years, wrote an account of the cavalry's participation at Gettysburg. He pictured the first and second brigades of Buford's cavalry as encamped near Leesburg, Virginia, on June 26, 1863. Units of the 8th and 12th cavalry were included. They crossed the Potomac at Edward's Ferry on June 27 near Ball's Bluff. The 8th had been on Virginia soil for about 20 months. Now the unit moved toward Gettysburg. On Tuesday, June 30, members of the First Brigade, 8th Cavalry, under Colonel William Gamble, moved out from Gettysburg on the Chambersburg Pike about a half mile and went into camp in the little valley west of Seminary Ridge. Back of Seminary Ridge was Gettysburg and back of Gettysburg stood Cemetery Hill.³⁵

The 8th Illinois sent a squadron out on the Chambersburg Pike two miles and picketed the Ridge east of Marsh Creek, posting an advance picket on the pike at a blacksmith's shop near the bridge over the creek. The 12th Illinois and Third Indiana picketed the Ridge to the right of the 8th Illinois picket line.

Beveridge describes the peaceful beauty of the Pennsylvania countryside on this "bright, beautiful day with sunlight dancing on the hill tops." The green landscape was dotted here and there with patches of grain yellowing for the harvest. Cattle were feeding lazily in the fields and there was no sound or sign of war except the strident note of the bugle. At sunset, when taps sounded, few dreamed of the terrible battle to begin on the following day, a battle which, in Beveridge's opinion, "would determine the destiny of the Republic and fix the fate of human liberty on the earth."³⁶

On the morning of July 1 Captain Daniel W. Buck of Naperville, Illinois, in command of the 8th Illinois picket squadron sent word that the enemy was advancing. Henry Heth's division of A. P. Hill's corps was marching down the Chambersburg Pike toward Gettysburg. Beveridge describes the opening hostilities as follows:

As the enemy in grey neared the stone bridge across Marsh Creek, an officer riding at the head of his column, halted by the stone coping to allow his men to pass. Lt. Marcellus Jones, in command of the 8th Illinois picket line at that point and standing on the pike, took the carbine of Sergeant Shafer, raised it to his shoulder, aimed at the officer sitting on his horse, and fired the first gun at Gettysburg.



Just over the fence from the Chambersburg Pike in a private dooryard located on the summit of the ridge, about 700 feet east of Marsh Creek and three miles from Gettysburg stands a simple stone marker some 18 inches square. On one face the stone is inscribed "First shot at Gettysburg, July 1, 1863, 7:30 A.M." On another side appears the added information "Fired by Capt. M. E. Jones, with Sergeant Shafer's carbine. Company E, 8th Regiment Illinois Cavalry."³⁷ Jones had been promoted from 2nd Lieutenant to Captain on October 10, 1864.

By August 11, 1863, the 8th was stationed near Rappahannock Station, Virginia. Frank Rogers, answering a letter from his mother, notes with sorrow the sickness and death of a cousin, John Cotes, who had been serving with the 105th Infantry:

It seems very singular that there has so many of our acquaintance died out of that Regiment. I don't think it is as healthy a climate there as it is here. The 105th must be a very unlucky Regiment. We lost but very few men by sickness the first year of our service.

We are now in camp near Rappahannock Station and I think it probable that we shall remain here a long time unless we accept a proposition which has been made by the War Department; it is as follows: We are to return to Illinois as a Regiment and after we get there we are to have a 30 day furlough and then we are to recruit up the Regiment and be attached to the Farnsworth Veteran Brigade. We are to enlist for two years longer after the expiration of our three years. We receive the hundred dollars bounty that is due us and four hundred and two dollars for reenlisting. I think this is a very fair offer and I think the Proposition will be accepted if a majority of the Regiment are in favor of it.

... We crossed the River the day after I last wrote you. We had quite a fight. We drove the Rebels about 6 miles. We moved back across the River again day before yesterday. The Infantry relieved us.

I see by the papers that the Rebels feel rather gloomy over their defeat in the West. I see that the North Carolinas are very dissatisfied with the manner in which the war is carried on by the War Department at Richmond. It don't seem as though this war could last another year. It seems that there is a division in the South as well as the North.

I do not think there will be a movement made by the Army of the Potomac until we are reinforced by our conscripts unless General Lee undertakes another Maryland campaign and I don't think he will feel disposed to try that again at present. It is reported that he lost 35,000 men in his last Maryland campaign. I expect that the main force of his army is in the vicinity of Gordonsville.³⁸



By October, 1863, the 8th was involved in heavy fighting in the vicinity of the Rapidan River. Frank Rogers described the action in a letter of October 19:

We have had very hard times since we left the Rapidan. We have been in the saddle most of the time night and day and besides this we have done some of the hardest fighting that we have done since I have been with the Regiment. Our loss has been heavy. We have had two killed out of my Company since we left the Rapidan and one wounded. General Ringman of Danby and Sergeant Sewell Flagg, Lien Flagg's brother are their names.

I think there is a general battle going on today as I can see the smoke rise and the cannonading is very heavy. We are on the old battle ground of Centerville. I have never been here before . . .

We had a very hard fight from the time we left the Rapidan until we crossed the Rappahannock. We fought infantry and cavalry all day without any other support than cavalry.

I never enjoyed better health than at present. It seems that the more hardships I have to endure the better my health. There were three nights in succession that we did not get two hours sleep . . . and we hardly stopped long enough in a place to make a cup of coffee . . . If you could only know what the hardships are that we endure I think it would surprise you.³⁹



When General Grant led the Army of the Potomac across the Rapidan and into the savage fighting in the Wilderness in early May, 1864, the 8th Cavalry was not with him. After a brief furlough the unit had been ordered to oppose Confederate General Jubal Early's projected attack on Washington. From June 22 to July 2 the 8th participated in the raid against Petersburg and vicinity by James Harrison Wilson. Frank Rogers, writing on July 5 from City Point, Virginia described his reactions:

I saw the hardest times on this march that I have seen since I have been in the Army. We came very

near losing our whole Division. We lost all our artillery (16 pieces), wagons and ambulances. Dock Dodge was taken prisoner. He was driving the General Mess Wagon, he may have been killed but it is supposed he was taken prisoner.

We were entirely surrounded by infantry and cavalry. I have good reason to think that there were many of our prisoners killed after they surrendered. It is the report of those who escaped that they were shot down after they had given up their arms. I hope I shall not have occasion to make any more such raids while I am in the service.

After we got out from where they had us surrounded we had to march night and day for three days to keep out of the way of them and I never saw it so dusty in Illinois as it is here now. It was enough to kill anyone.

We are now lying in Camp on the banks of the James just below City Point. I don't know how long we shall remain here, but I presume not long as I notice they are not apt to allow the cavalry to remain idle long at a time this summer. Yesterday was the Fourth of July but it was not very extensively celebrated in this section as our boys feel more like resting than celebrating.⁴⁰

Roger's prophecy of renewed action proved accurate. When General Early made his appearance before the capitol on July 11, he met with stubborn resistance from the Federals, including four companies of the 8th, before stronger Union forces arrived from Grant's army. Early retreated on the night of July 12-13 with the 8th in hot pursuit. At Urbana the regiment held two Confederate brigades in check, thus helping to save the bleeding army of General Lew Wallace.⁴¹ Early's army contained the flower of the Army of Northern Virginia. It had defeated General Wallace in the Battle of Monocacy on July 9 and Wallace had retreated toward Baltimore rather than toward Washington. On July 11 the 8th Illinois helped to hold Early's forces in check on the Rockville Road and continued to play an important role prior to the arrival of General Horatio Wright and Sixth Corps forces sent by Grant.⁴²

The twin regiment of the 8th Cavalry was the 12th Illinois Cavalry which included some forty-eight men from Du Page County. The two regiments frequently fought side by side. Many of the members of Company C, under Capt. Stephen Bronson of Wheaton, were from Du Page. The Regiment took part in the battles of Fredericksburg, Williamsport, Falling Waters, the Rapidan, and Stevensburg. Later it fought with General Nathaniel Banks in the Red River campaign.

This cavalry unit took part in the raid by General George Stoneman during the Chancellorsville campaign in May, 1863. It passed in the rear of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia and reached a distance of from two to seven miles from Richmond. Lt. Col. Hasbrouck Davis, who was in command of the 12th, received orders to penetrate the Fredericksburg railroad and, if possible, the Virginia Central. The objective was to destroy communications between Richmond and Lee's army then confronting Hooker on the Rappahannock. The 12th Cavalry passed down the bank of the South Anna through a region never before occupied by Union troops. It effectually destroyed the railroads on May 5. Telegraph wires were cut and depot buildings, storehouses, etc., burned. The Regiment marched to within seven miles of Richmond, bivouacked until 8 o'clock next morning and proceeded on to Williamsburg. The raid involved a total distance of 300 miles. In subsequent raids made from its base at Gloucester Point the 12th captured General William Henry Fitzhugh "Rooney" Lee, a son of Robert E. Lee. Lee had been wounded and was recovering when captured by the force under Col. S. D. Spear. The 12th was with Buford's Division at Gettysburg. After the battle it helped save a brigade of Pennsylvania militia and a battery of artillery commanded by General William F. "Baldy" Smith which was being hotly pressed by Longstreet's men. On July 4 the 12th was ordered to Williamsport to sieze the ford and hold it against the enemy. On this march some 2000 rebels were captured. The 8th and 12th Regiments combined forces at Williamsport to drive out a portion of Stuart's cavalry.⁴³

Aside from those who saw service in the infantry and cavalry, some twenty-five men from Du Page County served in the artillery. Most of these were with the Second Artillery, with smaller numbers enlisted in Cogswell's Battery, Petit's Battery, the First Artillery and Barker's Dragoons.

At the close of the war many of the men who had left Du Page County in 1861 were sleeping in many southern battlefields. Some were starving at Andersonville or Libby Prisons. Still others had decided to go further west in search of new homes.

Men returning to Downers Grove and Naperville found that the old plank road, which had been built in 1850, was now largely supplanted by the new Burlington and Quincy Railroad. A few miles to the east, Chicago was becoming the metropolis of the Middle West. The war had developed new farming opportunities and Illinois was developing into the nation's agricultural center. The war had brought higher prices for grain and livestock and wages were tending to rise. Stock raising, which had seen an increase during the war years, continued to expand during the post-war era. The dairy industry had been given impetus in Du Page County and elsewhere in Illinois by the establishment of a large cheese factory in Bloomingdale township in 1864. Farmers were becoming active in the formation of clubs and agricultural societies.⁴

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Benjamin F. Taylor, journalist reporter, poet, and citizen of Wheaton, performed a service for the brave men from Du Page County similar to that rendered by Ernie Pyle for American soldiers during World War II. Taylor has left us some vivid first hand impressions of Illinois troops at the front in his *Pictures of Life in Camp and Field*, a volume published in 1875.

In describing the attack on Missionary Ridge during the battle of Chattanooga, Taylor gives us the following picture of the line of skirmishers:



That splendid line, two miles long, as straight and unwavering as a ray of light. On they went, driving in the pickets before them; shots of musketry, like the first drops of summer rain upon the roof, pattered along the line.

Then the division of Wood and Sheridan began to move.

Black rifle pits were tipped with fire; sheets of

flame flashed out of the woods; the spatter of musketry deepened into volley and rolled like muffled drums . . . The glowing wall of blue moved straight toward Orchard Knob.

In this wall of blue were Du Page County men from the 13th, 19th, 33rd, 36th, 42, 44th, 51st, 88th and 89th Regiments, each, according to Taylor, "with its tale of battle, its roll of honor and its glorious deeds."⁴⁵

Sherman's Army of the Tennessee was on the extreme left. The roar of its guns was like the "striking of a great clock." It was, says Taylor, "the ring of Sherman's iron knuckles knocking at the northern door of Mission Ridge for entrance."⁴⁶

Troops moved up the steep sides of the ridge in a row of inverted v's with regimental flags in the lead. Fifteen of the colors had been borne at Pea Ridge, Shiloh, Stone River and Chickamauga. Three times the flag of the 27th Illinois went down. Three color sergeants were dead. Finally, as the battle roared toward victory, John Cheevers of the 88th Illinois planted his flag by Bragg's headquarters. The battle was won! Wandering over the battlefield after the conflict had subsided, Taylor found that among the many who died on Missionary Ridge scarcely a face was distorted by passion. All were at peace.⁶⁷

In describing the encampment of the 105th Illinois Infantry which he visited, Taylor insisted that "no better material ever went to the front from the Prairie State . . . The rank and file were like a field of wheat, the bearded grain and the flowers that grow between, stalwart manhood and youth with springy step."⁴⁸

Writing some ten years after the great struggle Taylor could recall "the old enthusiasm that kindled the homes of Du Page" and sent young men to endure the terrible ordeals of bloody battles, long marches and harsh climates in the East and the West. By 1875 it all seemed like "the song of bugles in a dream." Pondering the meaning of what he had witnessed, Taylor recalled that he could count thirteen dwellings in one glance from his cottage home in Wheaton. From every one of these, soldiers, sometimes in pairs, had departed to struggle during the long and bloody campaigns

on the western and eastern fronts. Now the great conflict was a part of history. The men of Du Page, together with thousands of other sons of Illinois, had made their contribution to the preservation of the Union and the destruction of slavery. As Taylor wrote,

*The graves are made; the sword is sheathed; the musket hangs dumb upon its wooden hooks; the white blessings of peace like lilies strow the water and bloom along the land like daisies in the June pasture."*⁴⁹

To many 20th Century Americans the War for the Union in which the men from Du Page County fought and, in some cases, died, may seem like the sound of bugles in a dream. But the sacrifices which were made when the buglers called are an imperishable part of the heritage of each one of us. They should be recalled with deepest gratitude during these Centennial years.

It was a terrible, costly, cruel and ruthless war, but it was not a vain one. It saved the Federal Union from certain dissolution so that those of us living a century later can still say that government of the people, by the people and for the people has not yet perished from the earth. In the spirit of one who spoke with malice toward none and with charity for all this record of Du Page County's contribution to the Civil War is gratefully submitted.

ROYAL J. SCHMIDT
ELMHURST COLLEGE
SEPTEMBER 9, 1962



NOTES

1. The source of these statistics is a map of Du Page County, Illinois, 1861, published by L. G. Bennett and Horace Books, in the collection of the Du Page County Historical Society.
2. A memorial to those who served, with names on bronze tablets, may be seen in the Memorial Hall, in the Du Page County Court House, Wheaton, Illinois. Lists are also included in Newton Bateman and Paul Selby (editors), *Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Du Page County* (Chicago: Munsell Publishing Co., 1913; Rufus Blanchard, *History of Du Page County, Illinois* (Chicago: O. L. Baskin and Co., 1882); Board of Supervisors of Du Page County, *History of Du Page County* (Aurora: Knickerbocker and Holden, 1877); and in the various volumes of the *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Illinois for 1861-66* (Springfield: Philips Bros., 1900)
3. Board of Supervisors of Du Page County, *History of Du Page County* (Aurora, 1877), pp. 58-59.
4. Clyde S. Kilbey, *Minority of One—The Biography of Jonathan Blanchard* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Erdmans Pub. Co., 1959), pp. 55-153.
5. *Chicago Tribune*, April 30, 1861.
6. Bateman and Selby, *op. cit.*, pp. 716-17; *Chicago Tribune*, April 25, 1861.
7. Board of Supervisors, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 63; *Chicago Tribune*, April 30, 1861.
9. *Ibid.*, Feb. 8, 1862.
10. *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Illinois (1861-66)*, Vol. I, Revised by Brig. Gen. J. N. Reece, Adj. Gen. (Springfield, 1900), pp. 384-87.
11. *Loc. cit.* See also Board of Supervisors, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 65-69; Adjutant General's Report, *op. cit.*, pp. 605-8.
14. *Loc. cit.*
15. *Loc. cit.*; see also Board of Supervisors, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-69, and Blanchard, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-94.

16. Board of Supervisors, *op. cit.* pp. 75; and Blanchard, *op. cit.*, p. 94.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 106; *Adjutant General's Report*, pp. 686-88.
19. Robert Hall Strong, *A Yankee Private's Civil War*, ed. by Ashley Halsey (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1961), pp. 33-34.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19, 23-28, 71, 109.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.
22. *Chicago Tribune*, April 25, 1861.
23. Abner Hard, *History of the 8th Cavalry Regiment Illinois Volunteers During the Great Rebellion* (Aurora, 1868), pp. 34-38; *Adjutant General's Report*, pp. 155-56; Blanchard, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27; Board of Supervisors, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
24. Francis (Frank) Rogers to his parents in Downers Grove, Illinois, Nov. 10, 1861, letter in possession of his son Elbert Rogers of Downers Grove.
25. Hard, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-38.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 47; See also Roy P. Basler (Ed.) *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Vol. III (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1955), pp. 174, 241.
27. Hard, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-29.
28. *Loc. cit.*
29. Frank Rogers to his mother, Mrs. C. A. Rogers, June 18, 1862, letter in possession of Elbert Rogers.
30. Hard, *op. cit.*, p. 131.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 160.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 234.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 256-59.
34. *Loc. cit.*

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35. *Military Essays and Recollections, Papers Read Before the Commandry of the State of Illinois, Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the U.S.*, Vol. II (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1894), pp. 86-9.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92.
38. Frank Rogers to Mrs. C. A. Rogers, August 11, 1863, letter in possession of Elbert Rogers.
39. Frank Rogers to his parents, October 19, 1863, letter in possession of Elbert Rogers.
40. Frank Rogers to his parents, July 5, 1864, letter in possession of Elbert Rogers.
41. Hard, *op. cit.*, pp. 293-304.
42. *Military Essays and Recollections, op. cit.*, pp. 128-41.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 319-322; *Adjutant General's Report, op. cit.*, pp. 376-79; Board of County Supervisors, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-4; Blanchard, *op. cit.*, p. 131.
44. *Du Page County-A Descriptive and Historical Guide 1831-1939* edited by Marion Knoblauch (Elmhurst, Illinois, 1948), p. 25.
45. Benjamine F. Taylor *Pictures of Life in Camp and Field* (Chicago: S. C. Griggs and Co., 1875), pp. 17-72.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 70-72, 85-88.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 267.
49. *Ibid.*, pp. 268-70.



Next Year's Portfolio

Our next year's publication committee is planning to follow up this monograph on the military history of DuPage County in the Civil War with a collection of materials dealing with outstanding civilian participation in the war effort on the home front. Members of the Society are invited to aid in the assembling of pertinent materials from every part of the county. Send suggestions to: H. A. Berens, Editor, 110 Kenmore Avenue, Elmhurst, Illinois.

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